

Message Text

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72

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

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R 271920Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1325

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 3535

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, DR

SUBJECT: BALAGUER-OPPOSITION DIALOGUE

REF : SD 3421

1. ON AUG 21, PRESIDENT BALAGUER PRESENTED TO CONGRESS A PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT WHICH WOULD GRANT THE PRESIDENT POWER TO PROCLAIM A STATE OF SIEGE WITHOUT PRIOR CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORIZATION EVEN WHILE CONGRESS IS IN SESSION. THIS MOVE HAS APPARENTLY SET BACK A BUDDING GOVERNMENT-OPPOSITION DIALOGUE (REF). ON AUG 22, PRD SECRETARY GENERAL DR. JOSE FRANCISCO PENA GOMEZ DECLARED THAT THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT HAD OBLIGED THE SANTIAGO ACCORD TO RECONSIDER ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD A DIALOGUE WITH BALAGUER AND THAT THE ACCORD LEADERSHIP WOULD MEET IN "PERMANENT SESSION" UNTIL THE SITUATION WAS CLARIFIED.

2. THERE ARE REPORTS, HOWEVER, THAT THE ACCORD IS USING THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT AS A SMOKE SCREEN. ACCORDING TO ONE EMBASSY SOURCE, THE PRD AND PRSC ARE QUITE WILLING TO NEGOTIATE WITH BALAGUER, WITH OR WITHOUT THE AMENDMENT, BUT THE PQD AND THE MPD HAVE SADDLED THE ACCORD WITH PRE-SENTING DEMANDS WHICH WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR BALAGUER TO MEET. (THE MPD WANTS THE "POLITICAL PRISONERS" RELEASED AND THE PQD REQUIRES THE RETURN OF THEIR LEADER, EXILED
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EX-GENERAL ELIAS WESSIN Y WESSIN, BEFORE ACCORD-GOVERNMENT

DISCUSSIONS BEGIN).

3. TO AVOID THIS IMPASSE, THE ACCORD HAS ALL BUT OFFICIALLY DECIDED THAT ITS MEMBER PARTIES CAN NEGOTIATE INDIVIDUALLY WITH BALAGUER. THERE ARE INSISTENT RUMORS THAT THE PRD AND PRSC HAVE UNDERTAKEN SUCH A DIALOGUE AND THAT THE SOCIAL CHRISTIANS WILL SOON ENTER THE GOVERNMENT.

4. COMMENT: THE ACCORD PARTIES UNDERSTAND THAT THEY MUST MEET AND JOIN WITH BALAGUER IF THEY ARE TO ENJOY THE PRIVILEGES OF POWER. THE INTRANSIGENCE OF THE PQD, THE MPD AND SOME HARDLINE SECTORS OF THE PRD MAKES THIS DIFFICULT, HOWEVER. MOREOVER, THE QUIXOTIC NATURE OF PENA GOMEZ, WHO IS AS MUCH AFRAID OF COOPERATING WITH THE GODR AS HE IS AFRAID OF SPLITTING THE PRD, ADDS UNCERTAINTY TO AN ALREADY FLUID SITUATION. IN EFFECT, THE PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT HAS LITTLE REAL SIGNIFICANCE. THE PRESIDENT NOW CAN DECLARE A STATE OF SIEGE WHEN CONGRESS IS NOT IN SESSION AND CAN OBTAIN FROM HIS PLIANT CONGRESSMEN THE GRANT OF SUCH POWERS WHEN IT IS MEETING. BALAGUER'S REAL MOTIVATIONS IN INTRODUCING THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT ARE THUS OBSCURE. ONE THEORY IS THAT HE IS LOOKING AHEAD TO THE PERIOD AFTER 1978 WHEN A PRESIDENT UNDER HIS INFLUENCE MIGHT CONFRONT A LESS DOCILE CONGRESS. ANOTHER IS THAT, IN BYZANTINE FASHION, BALAGUER INTENDED TO INCREASE THE OPPOSITION'S RELUCTANCE TO ACCEPT HIS OFFER OF A DIALOGUE WHILE RETAINING THE APPEARANCE OF A CONCILIATOR THROUGH HIS AUG 16 SPEECH. IN ANY CASE, THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT HAS HEIGHTENED THE OPPOSITION'S DISTRUST OF THE PRESIDENT. HURWITCH

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